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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
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4-22 March 2002

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES*

1. At its 1511th meeting, held on 14 March 2002 (see CERD/C/SR.1511), the Committee reviewed the implementation of the Convention by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines based upon the State party's initial report (CERD/C/85/Add.1), the concluding observations issued in relation to that report (see A/39/18) and previous reviews of the implementation of the Convention undertaken in 1992 and 1996 (see A/47/18 and A/51/18, paras. 443-445). The Committee reiterates its regret that the State party has not submitted a report since the submission of its initial report in 1983.

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* Please note that the symbol CERD/C/Session No./CO/... will from now on replace the previous symbol, CERD/C/304/Add...

2. Recalling that the purpose of the reporting system is for States parties to establish and maintain a dialogue with the Committee on the measures adopted, progress made and difficulties encountered in complying with the obligations under the Convention, the Committee regrets that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has not been able to respond to its invitation to participate in the meeting and to furnish relevant information. In this connection, it is noted that the State party does not have diplomatic representation in Geneva. The Committee further notes that the non-performance by a State of its reporting obligations creates serious obstacles to the effective functioning of the monitoring system set up by the Convention.

3. The Committee reiterates its concern that the initial report of St. Vincent and the Grenadines did not comply with the requirements of article 9 of the Convention as it consisted of a single paragraph asserting that there was no form of racial discrimination practised in the country and that protection from such discrimination was provided in the basic clauses of the Constitution. In this connection, the Committee takes note of reports regarding the human rights situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, including alleged discrimination against certain minorities such as the Amerindians and Asians. Reports further indicate that these groups are overrepresented at the lower-income levels of the State economy and that members of some minorities consider that they have been discriminated against by the majority.

4. While noting that the State party recently submitted a detailed report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/28/Add.18) and previously to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/52/38/Rev.1, paras.123-150), the Committee suggests that the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines avail itself of the technical assistance offered under the advisory services and technical assistance programme of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the aim of preparing and submitting, as soon as possible, a report drafted in accordance with the reporting guidelines.

5. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to the provisions of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, according to which the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination is the principal international instrument for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and States are urged to cooperate with the Committee in order to promote the effective implementation of the Convention.